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Undergraduates' Adjustment Needs on Campus

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Abstract

This study investigated the adjustment needs of undergraduates of the University of Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti- State, Nigeria. An 'Undergraduates Counselling Needs Checklist' was administered on 350 undergraduates randomly from the eight Faculties in the University. The analysis revealed that students' needs ranged from study habits, personal concerns, examination schedule, orientation, security needs, financial needs, examination offences, sexual relationship, low academic performance, future concerns, religious needs, to health needs. There were significant gender differences in some need areas. There is the need for counselling activities for students on coping skills in the identified needs areas with more attention on female students.

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1. Introduction

Campus life is sometimes said to be the best of life experiences. However, one cannot but inquire if the assertion still holds of today's University life. That is, will undergraduates indicate a stress free or pleasant life on campus? While one may not be utopian in the expectation of desirable adjusted life on campus, it could be agitated that for the purpose of higher education to be fulfilled, students should not be bombarded with excessive coping problems on their studies. It is believed that for a nation to experience quality education, that is, a process where the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning would meet-up with the prescribed standard, the quality of her students cannot be overlooked. The attempt to have quality in higher education implies that the undergraduates must also possess desirable attributes and values. Most of the undergraduates today are adolescents. By this, they are expected to be confronted with some biological and psycho-social concerns [1]. These needs for personal fulfilment and social acceptance must be satisfied if a wholesome personality is to be attained [2]. Enhancing quality education therefore does not end at providing cognitive impetus or meeting-up with academic or certification requirements, but includes an adjustment situation in which students would realise their strengths and weaknesses and how to cope with them [3]. The nature of students' adjustment should be seen as a central or major determinant of the extent of quality that could be expected in an educational system. The concern of this research is therefore to find out the prevalence of the undergraduates' adjustment needs on campus and determine if gender significantly influenced these adjustment needs.

2. Methodology

This report is part of the results of a larger survey on the counselling needs of undergraduates in the University of Ado-Ekiti. The population comprised the undergraduates in the eight faculties of the University of Ado-Ekiti as at the time of this study. A sample of 350 undergraduates randomly selected from the faculties participated in the study. Although 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the basis of 50 per faculty, some were not

usable. A researcher-designed instrument used for the study was titled 'Undergraduates Counselling Needs Checklist' (UCONC). The section 'A' of the instrument was on personal data while section 'B' requested the subjects to indicate their adjustment needs among: orientation, study habit, examination schedule, examination offences, personal concerns, social needs, health needs, financial needs, security needs on campus, sexual relationship, low academic performance, religious needs and future concerns. Four items were drawn on each need. The respondents were required to mark each item on a four-point scale of Always (4), Frequently (3), Sometimes (2), and Rarely (1), to indicate the extent to which they experienced the needs. The face and content validity of the instrument were established by lecturers of Counselling Psychology of the University of Ado-Ekiti Nigeria. The 'UCONC' was pilot-tested on 45 undergraduates in an interval of two weeks and a test-retest reliability co-efficient of 0.74 was obtained.

2.1. Data Collection and Analysis

The 'UCONC' was administered personally by the researcher with the help of some research assistants. The scores of each student on the extent to which the needs were experienced were calculated and cumulated to determine their group adjustment. On the needs, low scores indicated adjustment while high scores pointed to maladjustment. The responses of 'always' and 'frequently' were counted together as high adjustment needs while responses of 'sometimes' and 'rarely' were rated together as low adjustment needs. The data was analysed using frequency counts, percentages and chi-square analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the data analysis are represented in this section. The adjustment needs are presented in order of intensity. A discussion of the results also followed.

3.1. Research Question

What is the prevalence of undergraduates adjustment needs?

Table 1: Prevalence of Undergraduates Adjustment Needs.

S/N	Needs Categories N = 350	Highly Experienced		Minimally Experienced	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Study Habit	310	88.57	40	11.43
2.	Personal Concerns	292	83.43	58	16.53
3.	Examination Schedule	271	77.43	79	22.57
4.	Orientation	226	64.57	124	35.43
5.	Security Needs	182	52.00	168	48.00
6.	Financial Constraints	179	51.14	171	48.86
7.	Examination Offences	157	44.86	193	55.14
8.	Sexual Relationship	150	42.86	200	57.14
9.	Low Academic Performance	148	42.29	202	57.71
10.	Future Concerns	141	40.29	209	59.71
11.	Social Needs	75	21.43	275	78.57
12.	Religious Needs	43	12.29	307	87.71
13.	Health Needs	32	9.14	318	90.86
	All Needs (100%)	2206	48.48	2344	51.52

Table 1 reveals the undergraduates responses on their adjustment needs. The highly experienced needs were those connected with study habit, personal concerns, examination schedule, orientation, security needs and financial needs which had 88.57%, 83.43%, 77.43%, 64.57%, 52.00% and 51.14% respectively. Examination offences, sexual relationship problems, low academic performance and future concerns were moderately indicated with about 40%. The least experienced needs were social needs, religious needs and lastly, health needs.

3.2. The Hypothesis

Gender will not significantly influence undergraduates' adjustment needs.

Table 2: Influence of Gender on Undergraduates Adjustment Needs

S/N	Counselling Needs	Extent of Needs	Males N = 180		Females N = 170		X^2_c
			F	%	F	%	
1.	Study Habit	High 310	163	90.56	147	86.47	1.47
		Low 40	17	9.44	23	13.53	NS
2.	Personal Concerns	High 292	142	78.89	150	88.24	5.56
		Low 58	38	21.11	20	11.76	S
3.	Examination Schedule	High 271	122	67.78	149	87.65	19.81
		Low 79	58	32.22	21	12.35	S
4.	Orientation	High 226	129	71.67	97	57.06	8.19
		Low 124	51	28.33	73	42.94	S
5.	Security Needs	High 182	80	44.44	102	60	8.48
		Low 168	100	55.56	68	40	S
6.	Financial Needs	High 179	126	70	53	31.18	52.6
		Low 171	54	30	117	68.82	S
7.	Examinations Offences	High 157	69	38.33	88	51.76	6.3
		Low 193	111	61.67	82	48.24	S
8.	Sexual Problems Relationships	High 150	57	31.67	93	54.71	18.9
		Low 200	123	68.33	77	45.29	S
9.	Low Performance Academic	High 148	82	45.56	66	38.82	1.63
		Low 202	98	54.44	104	61.18	NS
10.	Future Concern	High 141	49	27.22	92	54.12	26.3
		Low 209	131	72.78	78	45.88	S
11.	Social Needs	High 75	21	11.67	54	31.76	21.04
		Low 275	159	88.33	116	68.24	S
12.	Religious Needs	High 43	17	9.44	26	15.29	2.76
		Low 307	163	90.56	144	84.71	NS
13.	Health Needs	High 32	9	5	23	13.53	7.8
		Low 318	171	95	147	86.47	S

S = Significant NS = Not Significant 0.05 significance level $X^2_t = 3.84$

The analysis in Table 2 demonstrates the influence of gender on the in-school adjustment of the undergraduates in this study. Significant differences existed between the male and female subjects as revealed by the x^2_c values ($df=1$, $p < 0.05$) female students significantly experienced higher needs on personal concerns, examination schedule, security needs on campus, examination offences, sexual relationship, future concerns, social relationship constraints and health needs. Male students' constraints were significantly higher than their female colleagues only on orientation needs and financial needs. The null hypothesis was therefore not accepted. However, the students did not differ significantly in their study habit problems, low academic performance and religious needs as revealed by the analysis.

3.3. Discussion

The findings on Table 1 have revealed study habit, and worries over examination schedule as the first and third ranked problems respectively. This result agrees with the findings of Olofintoye (1992) [4] and Adesemowo (1988) [5] that students were more interested in discussing their educational/vocational concerns with counsellors. The high level of study habit problems reported by these students could be due to the fact that no organized attempt has been made to guide them on the issue, even with the overcrowded school calendar. That the respondents in this study ranked personal adjustment problems second, is contrary to some past reports. For instance, Pulleyblank (1974) [6] and Mack (1979) [7] had earlier reported that students were reluctant at disclosing the true magnitude of their personal problems. However, the present result is not far from the observation of Adamolekun (1981) [8] that younger adolescents were interested in discussing their personal-social concerns. The fact that the students' personal worries could be disturbing their academic work might have prompted them to open up. Orientation needs ranked fourth among the students. This is a pointer to the fact that the regular orientation programme for fresh students is now non-functional. Placement of information on notice boards might not be sufficient for the thousands of students on campus. The least reported problem is on health. This could be expected since the University has a centralised and functional health centre for the students' health care.

These undergraduate boys and girls did not demonstrate any significant difference in their study habit concerns, worries over low academic performance and religious needs. This is probably because all students were exposed to equal academic conditions and freedom of worship, their sex notwithstanding. That the boys claimed to lack information than the girls could be because the girls were more patient and inquisitive. The boys might also be facing more financial needs as Nigerian parents might finance their female children than boys, thinking that females spend on more items on campus. The female students experienced significantly higher needs on personal, security, sexual, social, health and future related concerns than boys. This is quite understandable as females might demonstrate more concerns about their personality, fear more during campus crisis, prone to frequent sexual attraction, be more conscious of social acceptance, be more detailed about their health, and worried more about marriage and other issues about the future than boys.

4. Conclusions

Considering the results of this study it could be concluded that undergraduates' adjustment needs ranged from study habit, personal concerns, and concerns over examination schedule, orientation needs, security needs, financial constraints, examination offences, sexual relationship problems, low academic performance, future concerns, social needs and religious needs, to health needs. The research also revealed that female students experienced more adjustment needs than males on personal concerns, examination schedule, security needs, examination offences, sexual relationship, future concerns, social relationships and health needs. Both male and female undergraduates however, had similar concerns on study habit, low academic performance and religious activities. The boys experienced more financial constraints and were less informed about the University activities than girls.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that all undergraduates should have files with the counselling centre, be exposed to study habit inventories, and be organised for group counselling activities on coping skills in the identified need areas while more attention should be given to the female students on individual counselling activities. There is the need to employ both professional practicing male and female counsellors to monitor the counselling programmes on campus.

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